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THE NONGKREM PUJA IN THE KHASI MOUNTAINS (ASSAM)

(DIE NONGKREM-PUJA IN DEN KHASI-BERGEN (ASSAM))

003

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[title page]

/487/ The Nongkrem Puja in the Khasi Nongmaiso (Assam) (I)

/26 1. All the pictures attached to this article are prepared from photographs taken by P. Prosperous Dagmailen, S.D.S., missionary in Shillong. The photographs were in part very difficult to take as they had to be made without being observed and in some cases the day was already well advanced.

by P. Dr. C. Booken, S.D.S., Apostolic Prefect of Assam.

4.51 About ten English miles to the east of Shillong, the chief town of the Khasi Nongmaiso, lies the town of Nongkrem. It is the seat of the king (U Siem) who governs the state Nongkrem of Khyrim, the largest of the 25 Khasi little states and which is partly independent (semi-independent) of the English government. Nongkrem is best known for the great sacrifice, simply called Nongkrem Puja or also as Pom Niang-u-U'lam Nongkrem (Slaying the goat of the U'lam of Nongkrem) which takes place there annually. This festivity offers, as little else does, an instructive insight into the religious and social views and customs of the interesting Nongmaiso people and should therefore be given a concise description, which may be divided into three parts.

I. The Preparations for the Sacrificial Feast,

II. The Sacrificial Feast,

III. The Celebration that Follows.

I. The Preparations for the Sacrificial Feast

For as much as the family among the Khasi [illegible] similar arrangement has been kept to the management of the Khasi state, Nongkrem. In the state, the U'lam is not the actual head but high priest, called Ki U'lam Ri. [illegible] the divinity which watches over the whole state. The temporal government is handled by the U'lam and by the U'lam [illegible] assisted [illegible] independent in the discharge [illegible] working with his advisers, whose advice he must obtain in matters of importance. The temple of the kingly

...ge by the Siem ...ā. Everything that comes in, such as taxes, [779]
...under contributions, or that which comes in through the administra- [775]
...tion of justice must be given to her. She may dispose of it as she
...sees best, while the Siem receives from her the money necessary for
...paying the costs of the government.

The Siem ...ā is the sole authority in matters of religion. She
...must watch over the religious sacrifices and determine the time and
...place for them. /Seeing p. 897 Fig. 1./ The Sacrifice (Nongkrem
...Puja) among the Khasi/ /885/ the stone sacrifices are held in her
...house or in front of her house, and they must be performed in her
...presence. The actual Siem is her son or nephew or even more dis-
...tant male relative, who is chosen by the "state council," the Dorbar.

After the death of the Siem ...ā, the office passes to her eld-
...est living daughter, and lacking such to the eldest daughter of her
...eldest daughter, and lacking such granddaughters to the eldest daugh-
...ter, and so forth. In case there are no daughters or granddaughters,
...the eldest living sister takes the office; if there are no sisters, then
...the eldest daughter of the eldest sister of the mother of the deceased
...Siem ...ā is the successor, and so it goes further. In this way the
...office always remains within the royal lineage.

In the house of the Siem ...ā [called ka-ūing ...ā], which is [778]
...one of the largest and most attractive in the Khasi Hills, there is a [782]
...post in the middle which reaches from the floor to the ridge of the [776]
...roof. It is called u ridor Dei (post, pillar of god) and serves at the
...same time as the altar before which many sacrifices are performed.
...The pillar is nothing other than the trunk of the Khasi oak [ka dieng [824]
...-iung, botanical name: Castanopsis sp.], which is holy to the Khasi.
...If the house of the Siem ...ā burns down, or if it is built up anew, a
...new pillar must be brought. Only certain families [clans] have the
...privilege of cutting down the tree for this purpose. As soon as it is
...cut down, dancing and music begins, the trunk is covered with a
...cloth and carried away on a carrying frame. Hundreds of persons
...participate in this. As long as the pillar is not set up, it is guarded
...night and day. A person or an animal might jump over it and then
...would be unclean. In such a case the trunk would be declared and another
...one would have to be cut down. If something dreadful happens in
...the kingdom, or if a danger threatens, the Siem ...ā goes with as
...many official and political priests of the kingdom together before the post
...and offers sacrifice there in order to avert the evil.

The foregoing has to be mentioned in order to give a better
...understanding of the following. [776 782]

The Nongkrem Puja usually takes place in the month of May.
...[See ... p. ... Rudolf]

One month before the celebration rice liquor is poured into a hollowed-out gourd bottle in the house of the Siem and offered before the eldest Sîei as a wait (sacrifice of drink). This is done in order to inform the u Suidnia long Siem (the spirit of the first great-uncle on the maternal side who was the first king), the ka Sîei long Siem (the divinity who makes kings known) and the u Sîei Shillong (the god Shillong), that preparations are now being made for the Puja and that they might help with them.

The u Sîei Shillong plays the chief part in the whole ceremony. He enjoys great reverence among the Khasi, especially in the kingdom Nongkrem and Nylliem. Not far from Nongkrem a mountain peak rises 6,450 feet above the sea. It is the highest peak in the Khasi Mountains. Its name is "Shillong Peak." Here is the seat of the god Shillong. The story goes that a man appeared here once, who said he [illegible] had not long been but came of himself (the king). He also told the people that they would receive the kings. Siem. So the god who lived there was called u Shu long (he who is out of himself), from which the Europeans gradually made the word Shillong and also gave the name to the splendid mountain station in the heart of the Khasi Mountains.

After the Siem Sî has determined exactly the day of the ceremonies, the news of this is sent out two weeks prior to the ceremony to the village elders (Rangbah shong). This is done on the day of the large market (Ja dub), which takes place every eighth day. Two weeks after is the pem iâing, also on the day of the large market, which is observed below.

The way in which the invitation is issued is interesting. A number of sticks about as tall long are made of bamboo rings. These are called kynroh. One of these is sent to the eldest man of each village. Since the Khasi faithfully hold on to origin, this bamboo stick always served as a sign of invitation or summons to the Siem for ceremonies, as of danger of war, as of court matters and such. The degree of urgency was shown by the form of the bamboo: in the case of great haste the form was knotty and flat, otherwise correspondingly rounder. The sending of the kynroh to the village elders were now as a sign of invitation for the whole village to appear at the ceremonies and at the same time as a demand to gather together the prescribed sacrificial gifts. Each of the six districts, into which the kingdom Nongkrem is divided, has to bring a goat, each individual but must pay a [illegible] per head of cattle and two annas in addition. Very poor people only have to pay one anna or even only a half. The sacrificial gifts consist of rice, various sacrificial animals, fish, brandy

and cash are bought with these contributions. The balance, as with other money, is handed over to the S'lem ebi for management.

Until the approach of the actual festival, the fish sacrifice (nai-dohbha) takes places on the day called jou punshiah, on which all who appear are fed with dried fish and brandy. This is supposed to be a further addition-present to the u Blei Shillong, u Sundria lang Slem and ka Blei lang-S'iem of the ironstone Puja. Twelve different kinds of drums (kong) are beaten.

Then the drum, kong thad ryngkoh, is beaten three times, and the fire sacrificial priest (Soh Blei) and a flute player dance. The dance, ryngkoh, will be described in more detail below. After it is finished, the kong kynthei (women drum) have a turn, to the sound of which the S'iem and the flute player (kohsla) dance three times. Usually only women dance to this drum. About the method of dancing it is sufficient to remark that in a Khasi dance the dancing persons do not touch each other, and each carries out the motions independent of the others. After the women drums are beaten, then the sword dance drum (kong mastieh) and the large drum (nakra) are beaten. Torches are carried around and down at joy uttered nine times. Various drums, flute music, and clashes of cymbals follow, while dancing takes place. /facing p. 896 (A) Fig. 2. Drums, flutes and cymbals of the Khasi. Fig. 3 Sacrificial knives and ka wait of the Khasi. Phot. P. From Stegmüller S. D. S. Fig. 4. Sacrificial dress of the Soh Blei (Khasi). Phot. P. From, Stegmüller, S. D. S. / /facing p. 896 (B) Fig. 10 (bis?). Khasi ornaments. Phot. P. Fro. Stegmüller, S. D. S. / /895/ At the end the S'iem dances alone, while the drums and flutes are not silent the whole night through. Fig. 3 shows several Khasi drums, a flute, and cymbals which are never missing from a dance.

The day of the large market, on which the actual ceremony begins, approaches meanwhile. On the day before -- ka sngi amai -- the roads are swept and the place for the sacrifice of the goat put in order. As a sign of joy as to what will happen, drums are beaten again and flutes (sangmat) played. In front of the house of the S'iem ret. the S'iem and other male perform a sword dance. Although interesting, this dance is not very artistic. Hopping and skipping from one foot to the other, the men, one behind the other, move slowly in a circle on the open place. (cf. Fig. 4).[1] They hold a bunch of goat hair in one hand and a sword in the other. A shout of joy is uttered from time to time, then they stop again, jump at each other two by two, and hit each other with quick blows of their swords. Each one quickly draws back again and moves in a circle again as before. In this way the dance continues.

[1] (See illustrations, see subjoining ill, pp. 44-48 ... Author)

this way the dance continues.

After it has become dark a hen is sacrificed in front of the house of the Sʼiem ïaid to the ka Sʼiem synshar (the queen who rules the world) and to the Blakuram, the god who interests in the playing of flutes and other instruments. Then various drums are beaten.

Then everyone goes inside the ïing ïaid. The Sʼiem ïaid kamdi the Sah Blei, the first sacrificial priest, who is from the family (jaid) Rymbong, a hollowed-out gourd bottle (u khaw) with rice liquor. The Sah Blei pours out the contents in front of the oldest Blei in honor of the goddess of the market (ka Blei jew lei hat) so that the markets will be good, remunerative and successful, so that the roads will be good and safe and everything will be blessed, so that the kingdom itself will progress and develop. It must be remembered here that the market system is very exalted among the Khasi and of the chief sources of their income. After this visit the same sacrificial drink is offered to the Ka Blei long Sʼiem in order to receive her blessings, so that the king will be good and may make progress. Music and dancing then last until day break.

E. The Sacrificial Feast

The actual ceremony begins on the day of the large market. This day itself is called por ïiang (great heads). The Sʼiem ïaid may not eat rice for three days, only a kind of bread, which is made from rice flour. On the large open place in front of the ïing ïaid the men hold their sword dance (shad wait) and guns are shot off until the Sʼiem ïaid, the Sʼiem and the Rung Ji (elder) come out of the ïing ïaid, following the Sʼiem ïaid, a low-caste girl (nong), who carries the utensils and sacrificial gifts. These are arranged by the Sʼiem ïaid herself and consist of a banana leaf, of which however only the upper part is taken (ka ka kait), five betel nut leaves (tymphew), five portions of betel nuts, as much as is usually put in the mouth at one time (kwai) /kwai/, a kind of bread made of rice flour (kpu), for which the rice is first put in water, then taken out, dried, and pounded into flour, then ryndi bread, which is also baked with pounded rice or corn mixed with sugar and rolled into the shape of ballets, some uncooked, boiled rice (u khaw), a gourd bottle with rice liquor (u khong) and several leaves of the Khasi oak tree. The following utensils are used: a golden or silver water container (u kora), a silver dishlike plate (ka pilong nga). All these are now given by the Sʼiem ïaid to the Sah Blei and in addition a rooster and a white he-goat are brought to the place of sacrifice.

The spectators now go to the side. The S'iem and the Sangbain come down to the place of sacrifice, while the Bah Blei receives the utensils and the sacrificial gifts and spreads them out in order on the ground. Then he takes the rooster in both hands and calls on the god Shillong with these words: "O god Shillong, thou who hast been named since time immemorial! (ha Blei Shillong bumbha la bah o long thwai)." With a deep bow he then offers the sacrifice five times. Rooster and goat are sprinkled with water, rice, and the flour from iga and rymti, and are then beheaded. Then the examination of the entrails (dylthei) takes place in order to see if the sacrifice was acceptable. The way of doing that will be given below. [187]

After the end of the sacrifice the Bah Blei and a flute player lead the sword dance, after them the S'iem and the other dancers follow in turn. Various drums are beaten alternately and flutes are played through the whole night. When night falls the guests of the S'iem and those of the various districts of the kingdom of Nongkrem are brought for the sacrifice of the next day.

The day following the great market is called ka ngi Lyngba. It is the center point and climax of the whole ceremony. From early in the morning the crowds pour in from all sides of the Khasi Mountains.

Early in the morning an unmarried girl of the royal lineage (ka S'iem ka dang Mynsaw) dances in the house of the S'iem ïâd before the richest Blei. Usually a granddaughter or nearer relative of the S'iem ïâd is chosen for this. Two men then take the girl in their arms and carry her with a rocking motion to the large open place in front of the ïing ïâd.

Then the great folk dance begins. In the middle of the place musicians squat on the ground and play the drums and flutes, and strike the cymbals. The music is quite without art, only a repetition of the same [illegible].

The women dancers move in a rather narrow circle around the musicians. Only the unmarried girls dance. The clothes they wear for it are very rich and frequently very valuable. Fine cloths, usually of red, yellow, or blue silk are draped over their bodies; the upper body and arms are covered by a satin jacket. Their hair is bound together in a bun behind their heads, a string hangs /facing p. 288. Fig. 5/Khasi Men Dancers in front of the ïing ïâd. Phot. F. From. Stegmüller, S.D.S. Fig. 6. Sword Dance of the Khasi. Fig. 7. S'iem ïâd and S'iem of Nongkrem. / /287/ down from the bun which usually ends in three tassels. The head is covered by a golden or silver crown of fine chased work, which is topped by a bunch of feathers or a bunch of artificial flowers. Around their necks they wear chains of gold or

[illegible]

6. Dancing-7 92-6, 5 (no date) 1919 A&T 83.gst A&T

silver and several in various sizes made of real corals. Their ~~[illegible]~~ are decorated with heavy earrings, shoes and stockings are worn. Around their arms and wrists are massive silver rings or hoops, the latter being quite wide and in the same shape as cuffs. Fig. 10 shows the ornaments in detail. The very grand women dancers usually have a servant carrying an opened umbrella behind them.

The Khasi dance does not have the exciting and lively motions that are characteristic of our dances. Each woman dancer with her arms hanging down at her sides and her eyes cast modestly to the ground could be considered a model of modesty. Each completes her motions alone and completely independent of the others. She continuously makes a circle around the musicians, moving sideways, forward, or backwards. At the same time the feet are kept close together and are moved seemingly so little that the motion is scarcely visible. When a woman dancer is tired she withdraws in order to rest a bit, and then enters again into the rows of the other dancers.

Fig. 9 and 10 illustrate the above description of the Khasi women dancers. Fig. 9 shows the girls in the dance in front of the ~~[illegible]~~, of which only the front part may be seen above in the picture on the right.

At a proper distance from the girls the men dance in a wider circle around the place. They also have special clothing. Over the usual white cloth that covers the lower part of the body they wear a [illegible], and over it a silk coat embroidered with many colors without sleeves which reaches to a long fringe. Cf. Fig. 9 for this. A cord or [illegible] large over over the back. Gaily colored [illegible] around the head. A bunch of artificial flowers [illegible] long red or black and white cocks feathers is placed in the [illegible], while the right hand holds a bunch of green twig. The [illegible] and ankles are now worn by many gaily dressed with the exception [illegible].

The manners of the men are quite lively from those of the dancing girls, but still quite reserved. In a dignified manner they hop [illegible] in unison in a childish way, without lifting their legs very high. In this way they move forward, describing a circle, at the same time they wave the barrel of their upward in the air. From time to time they stop and at a given signal the [illegible] with a loud resounding cheer of pleasure, while they swing the barrel of their [illegible] in the same time [illegible] Fig. 11.

[see category 6A, pp. 16-19 --- Book 15]

Then the dance continues for hours or a time outside the wave of the music. Thousands of spectators who do not seem to get tired turning around the great place. In the afternoon, at about three o'clock /935/ the dance, which plays a large part in all the religious ceremonies is ended. 935

Then preparations are made for the large sacrifice. In front of the house of the S'iem ïad several boards are placed in a row beside each other, and in front of them at certain intervals twelve little heaps of leaves are made. Music now plays inside of the iing ïad. All the sacrificial gifts are given to the S'iem ïad in front of the Khasi Blei and then distributed to the sacrificers by her. Then them go out of the hut to the place of the sacrifice. There are twelve of them, namely the six official sacrificial priests of the kingdom and several lyngdohs from the villages; the Soh Blei is at their head, wearing a special sacrificial coat (cf. Fig. 4),[1] while the others wear everyday clothes. Each one carries a dish in his hand with some rice, pounded flour for kpu and rynni, betel nuts and the pepper leaf that belongs with them, a small young hen, a water container, leaves of the Khasi oak tree, as well as a small gourd bottle with rice liquor. The dish and the water container of the sacrificial priests are of ornamented brass, those of the Soh Blei of silver -- all clean and polished until gleaming. 796 782

The spectators are arranged to the right and the left of the sacrificers, so that there is a wide alleyway open through the middle of the place to the gate of the board fence which surrounds the place and the iing ïad. Several men are constantly busy keeping the crowd within these bounds. No one may come in through the gate during the whole ceremony, because the god comes here during the sacrifice - therefore the broad path must be left open. If anyone should chance to wish to come in through the gate during the performance of the sacrifice, he is driven back with loud shouts. If he dared to come in anyway, in earlier times he would have been a child of death; now the fear of the English government might protect him to a certain extent, although this could hardly be an absolute guaranty of his life because of the religious excitement of the people. [cut]

The twelve now squat down on the boards placed in front of the iing ïad, the Soh Blei in the middle. Behind them the S'iem ïad sits alone on the steps which lead from the iing ïad to the place of the sacrifice. Somewhat further back sits the S'iem surrounded by his ministrants and relatives (cf. Fig 7).[2] The Soh Blei sets the example in all that follows, the others watch him and copy him. While each of the sacrificers slaughters only a small hen or a goat, the Soh Blei has

[1] For illustrations, see catalog no. 58, pp. 19 -- 8 --- Analyst

[2]

the right to kill two of them, since he sacrifices to the ka Blei long
horn and to the u Blei Shillong at the same time.

Each one places the little liquor bottle on the little pile of earth in front of him. This also represents the altar. Then they take pepper leaves and oak leaves and place them in a certain pattern beside and on top of each other, pieces of betel nuts are placed on them, and the whole is strewn with rice, kpu flour and rymi flour, while the [illegible] are murmured (cf. Fig. 1). Then follows the sacrifice of the [illegible] hens. The sacrificers each take one between both hands, murmur soft prayers, then /with/ the head of the little animal is sprinkled with water and strewn with rice, kpu flour, and rymi flour. Each one dips a kind of pocket knife in the water and then cuts through the throat of the chicken. The freshly flowing blood is allowed to drip on the altar -- the little pile of earth with the bottle of liquor and the leaves. Then the animals are taken out of the animals in order to see whether god is favorable to them or is angry with them because of the sins and wickedness of men. The sacrificers hold them up high with their right hands and look at them carefully. A joyful "u Blei (it is good)" expresses their sign and spreads through the circle of spectators.

This observing of entrails (dyttor) occurs at all the sacrifices. Although there are many kinds of such augaries, the following are more or less the usual ones. The gullet of chicken is about in the middle between the neck and the stomach and shaped like a fork. The right prong is called u Blei (god), the left one u briu (man). First the man is looked at to see if it is empty or shows any symptoms of illness or injury; in these cases the hen is not suitable for sacrifice. But even when everything is faultless, better signs are wanted. The [illegible] mentioned above is looked at and the sacrificer, holding the intestines in his hand, begins the ceremony with the question: "Nga kyllu nga bynthei ka ka ba ai ka khun, ieng ranghah u briu, donn u Blei (I ask and ask through the morning and the evening, does the man live and god bow?)" With his other hand he throws a little rice on the forking of the gullet, and because of the convulsive twitching actually one part or the other does rise. If the "man" rises, it is a good sign since the opposite branching, the "god" then bows or stays still as a sign of agreement.

If the omens are unfavorable, then it must be determined by throwing /perhaps a misprint -- I rewrite instead of Ka rwaiñ - ngai throwing/ why the god is angry and which sacrifice would [illegible] him. Then the sacrifice begins again until the omens [illegible] god is reconciled and propitiated.

[illegible] our Songkrem Feis. After the observing of the

entrails of the hens is completed with great rapidity. The main part of the ceremony begins. Goats are brought out of the inside of the ring hut and one is placed behind each of the sacrificers. This is shown in Fig. 1. The hens that have already been sacrificed and the other sacrificial objects that have been mentioned can be seen lying in front of the Sub Diri and the other sacrificial priests on the ground. The Sub Diri now takes a long knife (ka wait) between both his outstretched hands and uttering (prob.) a prayer with bowed head. Fig. 3 shows various kinds of such knives, the smaller folding ones and the ones mentioned above in describing the killing of the hens.

Meanwhile a kind of leaping place is thrown around the neck of one of the goats, and the people present pull it into the middle of the place where it /faring p. 698. Fig. 8. Dance of the Khasi Club in front of the ring hut. Two photographs by P. Frum. Ethnographical, S. D. S. Fig. 9. Women Khasi Dancers. Two photographs by P. Frum. Ethnographical, S. D. S. / /800/ is held fast by a rope. The Sub Diri gets up, walks up to the animal with the ka wait in his hand and waits for the instant when it holds still. With one blow the head flies on the ground. It is at once picked up and placed beside the goat horns standing on the little pile of earth. The twitching rump is dragged in front of the ring hut. This is continues until five goats are beheaded.

Now the Siem comes down to the sacrificial place. He takes the slaughtering knife in his hand, squats down in the place of the head priest, and observes as the latter had done the same ceremonies. Then he gets up and strides into the middle of the place in full costume with raised head and a self-conscious dignity. A goat has already been led out there. One blow and its head also rolls on the ground. He sacrifices the fifth goat to the divinity which made him king, whereupon the four others are sacrificed to the u Blei Shillong. A salvo of guns and a loud shout of joy accompanies each blow of the Siem.

The slaughter is now continued by others in endless turn. Sixty, eighty and more goats must lose their lives. The poor victims are not always lucky enough to be killed with one blow. The animal might break at the last minute or an unskilled hand may lack a certain firmness. Then the goat is only lightly wounded and crying seeks to escape. The sacrificer throws the knife away in order to disappear hastily among the spectators, some pick up earth and throw it at him with reproachful cries, while others seize the poor animal, throw it on the ground and saw the head off with the knife. That is a horrible sight. It is considered an unfavorable sign when the goat in our

796 beheaded with one blow. If it happens to one of the first twelve goats,
792 the man concerned must inquire through new sacrifices why his sacri-
787 fice was not pleasing to god.

The observing of the entrails is only done with the twelve first goats decapitated by the S'iem and the sacrificial priest. As in the case of pigs, it is only observed whether the liver, lungs, spleen and gall bladder are healthy and without spots, in which case the sacrifice is a good one and pleasing to god, otherwise through throwing /etc. could be egg throwing - Kiarwarbon/ and new sacrifices a more favorable result must be brought about.

During the night a pig is sacrificed to the honor of the a Suibhia long S'iem and he is informed thereby that Puja has now taken place and that it will take place once annually to the honor of the a Bini Shillong so that the kings will be lucky and healthy, the markets will enjoy progress and good results, and the children of the kingdom will be happy. This closes with the address to the Suibhia long S'iem: "Bring it about that the augury turns out well, and if the god Shillong should still not be satisfied, then reveal it to us through the augury."

The Sah Bini now takes a chicken in his hand, sprinkles it with water, rice, flour of kpu and rymi and speaks: "Now thou art sprinkled in order to lose thy life by having thy neck cut so that I can see the good or the evil (ka pynsem pynsieh ban duh ka mynsiem ban dybut u ryndang; ba ngan khmih ia ka tho ba aiei)." Then /Bh/ the animal's neck is cut, the blood, as mentioned above, is allowed to drip on the leaves and the ground burnt, and the entrails are taken out. After the augury has turned out favorably, a white he-goat is brought in and the Sah Bini speaks, "O god Shillong, this prayer is for thee, this sacrifice of the goat, of the leaf, of the kpu and rymi, of the utensils of preparation are for thee which thou hast given the royal family so that once annually the Puja may be celebrated in thy name, so that we may live happily, be healthy and increase, so that kings will arise so that their honor and that of the kingdom will grow and increase and the children of the kingdom will spread out to increase thy name and thy honor. O god Shillong, when thou hast received the sacrifice, bring it about that the heart, the lungs, the spleen, the gall bladder and the other parts are good."

Meanwhile dancers are arranged on both sides, they swing the sword (ka wait) and the bauch (a cymbal) around in the air and utter shouts of joy. As mentioned above, the goat is now driven three times with the various sacrificial gifts, and goes are shot off three times and shouts of joy effused. Then the S'iem gets up, takes the ka wait in his hand and sits down on the place of sacrifice. He takes

all his turban (he join spong) and thanks god three times in a loud voice, then he hands over the ka wait to the Sah Bini who does the same and then gives the knife to the sacrificer from the jaid Nongpoh, this one hands it on to the one from the jaid [illegible], and this one finally gives it to the one from the jaid Nongpong. Only one from these three families may undertake the beheading. When this has taken place, the head is placed on the leaves in front of the gourd bowls, and the entrails are taken from the body in order to read the omen. If these come out right, the dance of joy is set in motion. All members of the kingdom are invited to the feast, which consists of rice, sacrificial meat, and rice liquor and which lasts until early in the morning.

III. The Celebration that Follows.

On the evening of the following day -- called ruid Nuckong -- a special meeting of the council takes place, which is called Durbar Ka in order to announce that all the sacrifices are now past. The U Sem has mats spread out inside the house and in the front room for the people to sit on; he himself takes his place on a palong, a raised seat, in the front room. Goat meat and pork is distributed to all those present, while the person who is designated as the speaker at the Durbar and the five of the flute players receive beef suet. The U Sem goes to the village and has it announced three times that as long as the Durbar lasts nobody may leave his hut.

Then he takes his turban off, raises both hands and offers thanks in the name of the lord and creator (ka ka kynnong u trai u nongthai) who made him king, gave him subjects as well as the districts of the kingdom, the markets and the roads leading thither and prays that he will ever give strength, growth and progress and prosperity to the fields. Then he cries (Hi) out: "O god, lord and creator, give me, the U Sem, happiness and prosperity also, so that my thanks and submission to thee may become ever greater (Ah Bini, trai kynrad u nongthai u nongkah ki ai ka ai ki ia nga I U Sem ban nongkhraw ka ngah ka dang)." Then he steps back.

The one who has been made the speaker now follows from the said Synjuh. He thanks the U Sem three times and then says: "O lord, thou who has created heaven and earth, thou hast created the king that we may be children of his kingdom; thou hast given thereon and the moon for reckoning the year, so that we can have Puja once in every year, so that the king appears, the children of the valleys increase and thrive, the children of the Khasi Hills, the children of the

2. That mean the Khan themselves.

Khan (3), the childhood of the War (3), so that the sacrificial gifts will

1. All various folk tribes which compose the kingdom kingdoms

increase before the face of thy altar (Kin trai ba thao la ka lawng ka khyndew ska pyniang i S lem i kynsei ba lang ma ngi ki khun ki ka-jaki kaniba phi bah ka ngi bun khmih ia u briei, phi bah u briei bur khmih ka mem bun lang ka puja shi-ken shi mem bun shi bun rei i S lem bun rei ki khun dyllun khun shai, khun khai, khun Khnid, khun War bun khmih u khang u khat ka khmat ka duwai jong phi).

Then the drum of joy [illegible] be use and everybody is glorious in [illegible] The Queen and the Queen [illegible] of the main part of the world [illegible] the King before, [illegible] and [illegible] the world [illegible] long and [illegible] the over [illegible] with the participation of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Fig. 1. The Sacrifice (Mangkam Kipa) among the Khasis

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig 2. Drums, flutes and cymbals of the Khasi. Fig 3. Sacrificial knives and the mask of the Khasi. Fig. 4. Sacrificial dress of the Seh Blei (Khasi).

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

Fig. 7

Fig. 20. Khasi Ornaments